
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

VALUING AND INVESTING IN PEOPLE

Goal: Promote an organizational culture which values and invests in our people to support their professionalism, competency, and innovation as Federal leaders of wildlife damage management.

University and Graduate Student Involvement—During 1999, 11 NWRC scientists served on the graduate committees of 38 students at 9 universities. American universities included CSU, Mississippi State, North Dakota State, Utah State, Washington State, and the University of Florida. Foreign institutions included the University of Vienna, the University of Zagreb in Yugoslavia, and the Queensland University of Technology in Australia. Research conducted by these students supports the mission of the WS program.

Publication Recognition—Will Pitt, a biologist at NWRC's Logan, UT, field station, was recognized in August with a Top Paper Award (one of five such awards) for a paper published in the North American Journal of Fisheries Management during 1998. The authors of the article are W. C. Pitt, D. A. Beauchamp, and M. R. Conover, and its title is "Evaluation of Bioenergetics Models for Predicting Great Blue Heron Consumption of Rainbow Trout at Hatcheries." Results of the study showed that bioenergetic models can be used accurately to estimate fish consumption by depredating water birds. Estimates were most accurate when nonmigratory birds were involved and when reliable estimates of population size could be made.

The NWRC 1998 Publications Awards were given to the following journal articles:

Clark, L. 1998. Bird repellents: interaction of chemical agents in mixtures. Physiology and Behavior 64: 689–695.

Conner, M. M.; **Jaeger, M. M.;** Weller, T. J.; McCullough, D. R. 1999. Effect of coyote removal on sheep depredation in northern California. Journal of Wildlife Management 62(2): 690–699.

Kimball, B. A.; Nolte, D. L.; Engeman, R. M.; Johnston, J. J.; Stermitz, F. R. 1998. Chemically mediated foraging preference of black bears *(Ursus americanus).* Journal of Mammalogy 79: 448–456.

These three publications are excellent examples of the scope and quality of research being done by Center scientists to address a variety of wildlife damage issues.

Former NWRC Employees and Retirees—On February 19, 1999, NWRC hosted about 50 former Center employees and retirees at its newly open Wildlife Science Building in Fort Collins. For many participants, this was the first time they had returned to the Center. The theme of the gathering was "We're New" and highlighted the new facilities, name change, research process, ties with CSU, employees, and the role many of the former employees played in helping the Center succeed in making these changes happen.

Catfish Farmers of America Award—At their annual convention in New Orleans in February, the Catfish Farmers of America presented certificates of appreciation to representatives of the WS programs of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi as well as to Mark Tobin, NWRC's previous Starkville, MS, field station leader, for their efforts in helping to reduce depredations by fish-eating birds at commercial aquaculture farms. Following these presentations to WS, Associate Deputy Administrator Bill Clay presented an award to Hugh Warren, executive vice president for the Catfish Farmers of America, recognizing that organization's active support of the WS program.

FAA Award—Richard Dolbeer, field station leader in Sandusky, OH, received recognition from the FAA at the 22d Annual Airport Conference in Hershey, PA, in March. The conference was attended by 500 people in the aviation industry. Dolbeer was recognized for his skillful leadership in developing plans to manage wildlife hazards at airports and efforts in the development and application of technological procedures that have directly benefited the aviation environment.

Sweet Rewards—On May 20, NWRC hosted Fort Collins Federal Employee Recognition Day. More than 100 hundred people from various Federal agencies attended this award event. Mr. Ray Martinez, Mayor of Fort Collins, made presentations to Federal employees in the area who have made

significant contributions. NWRC's supervisory veterinary medical officer, Albert Dale, was recognized for his efforts in diversity awareness.

USDA Secretary's Honor Awards—In June 1999, the WS program (operations and research) received the USDA Secretary of Agriculture Honors Award for its efforts in developing methods and implementing operational control strategies for BTS's on Guam between 1995 and 1998. This was a group award with recognition going to 21 WS employees; it is one of the most prestigious awards USDA can present. The Center's research in this area has been an impressive team effort and has involved a large number of Center employees, 12 of whom were award recipients. Past NWRC recipients of this award include the International Program Section in 1991, Phyllis Harris in 1994, and Richard Dolbeer in 1997.

EXCEL Program—APHIS is implementing a new EXCEL Program to provide learning and development opportunities for both new and experienced APHIS support employees in grades GS–2 through GS–9. The program focuses on building skills and uses an online skills assessment inventory to develop individually tailored learning contracts. Each participant is supported by his or her supervisor, the EXCEL manager, and a mentor. There are 19 participants in the current program which began April 5, 1999, and continues until April 2000. NWRC has three participants in this program. Joe Fuller, budget analyst, will pursue learning about the budget process. Stewart Penrod, purchasing agent, will expand his purchasing skills to help NWRC fulfill its goal of purchasing more from small businesses. He will also focus on improving his facilitation skills. Cynthia Wolpert, secretary, will increase her presentation and communication skills to help her in her duties as a member of the WS Equal Employment Opportunity Committee and Special Emphasis Program. In addition, all three employees will participate in train-the-trainer classes to assist them in their work assignments.

Leadership Excellence Program—WS initiated a second Leadership Excellence Program to prepare employees to use leadership skills in current positions and future careers. NWRC budget analyst Joe Fuller is one of 19 WS employees participating in this 18-month developmental program.

Photography Recognition—The WS Eastern Region sponsors an annual photo contest that is open to all WS employees located in the Eastern Region. Contest categories coincide with the WS strategic goals. Three awards were won by John Humphrey, NWRC biologist at the Gainesville, FL, field station. John won first and third places in the "Developing Methods" category with photos relating to an ongoing study of vulture movements and second place in the "Valuing and Investing in People" category for a photo of a shooter during a firearm safety training course. Copies of the winning slides have been added to the Eastern Regional Office and Legislative and Public Affairs slide collections to use in professional publications and presentations and to inform the public about the diversity of services and benefits available through the WS program.

Leadership Award—Richard Bruggers, Assistant Director at NWRC, was recognized by the APHIS Leadership Council for his involvement in and support of the USDA–APHIS Leadership for Today and Tomorrow Program between 1998 and 1999.

USDA and GSA Recognition—NWRC Director Richard Curnow received a USDA Certificate of Merit from Richard Rominger, USDA Deputy Secretary, for his creativity and leadership in establishing the NWRC. Curnow and William Dusenberry, program manager for facilites planning and development, also received similar recognition from the General Services Administration for their outstanding dedication during the construction of the NWRC Wildlife Science Building.

Avian Repellent Patent Awarded—NWRC's Sandusky field station leader and a former NWRC scientist have been awarded a U.S. patent for "Lime as an Avian Feeding Repellent." This patent is based on a series of experiments conducted between 1993 and 1996 that showed dolomitic hydrated lime to be an effective avian feeding repellant. An advantage of lime as a repellant is that EPA registration issues should be greatly simplified because lime is commonly applied to lawns and croplands for soil enhancement.

D-pulegone Patent Awarded—NWRC scientists from the Logan, UT, and Sandusky, OH, field stations, together with an analytical chemist at the Monell Chemical Senses Center in Philadelphia, PA, were awarded a U.S. patent for "Naturally Occurring Odiferous Animal Repellant." This patent is based on a series of experiments demonstrating that d-pulegone (the odor of pennyroyal, a wild mint) is an effective feeding deterrent to both birds and mammals. The aversiveness of d-pulegone is mediated by irritation and toxicity.

NWRC 1999 Sabbatic Award—Dave Goldade, NWRC chemist in Fort Collins, was awarded an NWRC sabbatical opportunity. Dave used this opportunity to pursue graduate courses and plan thesis research toward his Ph.D. at CSU. His research will focus on the mode of action and secondary impacts of CPT, a chemical used in alleviating bird damage.

NWRC Hosts Three Visiting Scientists—The new NWRC Wildlife Science Building in Fort Collins was designed to facilitate hosting students and visiting scientists while on sabbaticals or conducting collaborative research with NWRC staff.

NWRC hosted three such scientists in 1999. Dr. Scott Hygnstrom of the University of Nebraska spent portions of his sabbatical leave from his university at NWRC. He presented a seminar on his deer–agricultural damage research. Deer damage was especially acute during certain stages of plant development, and deer were very adept at using nearby refuges to avoid hunters. During his sabbatical, Dr. Hygnstrom planned collaborative research with NWRC scientists, learned about NWRC administrative structure and outreach, assessed opportunities for regional wildlife damage cooperative units, worked with NWRC library staff on an annotated bibliography on biological management of wildlife damage, and completed several manuscripts.

Mr. Ian Temby visited NWRC from May 25 through June 1, 1999. He is the wildlife damage control officer for the State of Victoria, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Melbourne, Australia. His work involves the resolution of Australian wildlife–human conflict situations through a variety of methods, many of which are similar to those used by WS. Temby has been working extensively with damage to structures and crops by gulls and cockatoos and presented a seminar at NWRC on the problems, attempted solutions, and human dimensions of these conflicts in Australia. He is currently completing an M.S. degree program on his gull research at Deakin University. Temby included visits to several Center field stations during his travels in the United States. His trip was sponsored by a fellowship of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust.

Dr. Abdel–Kawy Abdel–Hakim Farag (Dr. Hakim) spent a 6-month sabbatical at NWRC in Fort Collins. He is an assistant professor at Menoufiya University near Cairo, Egypt. His stay at NWRC was sponsored by the Egyptian Embassy Cultural and Educational Bureau. Hakim has worked extensively with rodent problems in Egypt, including brown and black rats, Nile rats, and other species. He completed his Ph.D. at Moscow University, studying microtine rodents. His interests are rodent repellants, pheromones, modeling populations and damage, developing effective baits using inexpensive materials such as waste grains, and gaining exposure to new technologies and literature. While in Fort Collins, Hakim worked on several ongoing rodent studies and initiated a rodent pheromone study.